Electronic Records Management Skills Required by Administrative Secretaries of Public Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study evolved electronic records management skills required by administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State. Specifically, it determined electronic skills for records: creation; storage; and retrieval required by the administrative secretaries. The study adopted survey research design. Population was made up of 225 administrative secretaries and 23 business education lecturers from the two public universities in the state. Instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and t-test was used to test at 0.05 level of significance. Major findings are 15 electronic record creation skills, including ability to create printed copies of records and files, ($\overline{X}_g = 3.29$) among others. 12 electronic records storage skills, these include ability to use of e-mail to store faculty/department records ($\overline{X}_g = 3.80$) among others. 12 electronic record retrieval skills, including ability to use of classification scheme to search for records ($\overline{X}_g = 3.75$) among others. There is no significant between the mean responses of the administrative secretariat and the Business education lectures on all the electric records management skills.

Keywords: Electronic, Records, Management, Skills, Administrative, Secretaries, Public Universities, Creation, Storage, Retrieval.

Introduction

Electronic records are information generated electronically and stored by means of computer technology. Thee records include information or data files, created and stored in electronic form through the use of computers and application software (Makhura 2020). Electronic records are information that are available in electronic formats and such data can be accessed and utilized electronically. Electronic records unlock the contents previously difficult to access in paper form, enable more effective sharing of information and contribute to knowledge network flow. On daily basis, organizations generate records to support the activities they carry out and these records need to be managed properly. Poor records management practice could lead to corrupt practices, lack of accountability and poor governance structures. The major aim of any practice adopted for electronic records management in the public universities is to achieve effectiveness in the university administration. Electronic records management practices in public

universities according to Bake (2015), are the processes of creation, control, storage, retrieval, and disposal of students and staff records. Public universities are described as parastatals that award professional, non- professional certificates and involved in providing higher education opportunities. According to Osakwe (2020), records in most public universities are kept manually by the administrative secretaries.

Administrative secretaries in public universities are saddled with the responsibilities of assisting their boss and equally acts for their boss when directed. According to Akinleye (2019) administrative secretaries are executive assistants who has mastery of office skills, demonstrates the ability to assume responsibility without direct supervision, exercise initiatives and judgement and make decision within the scope of assigned authority. Skills are referred to learned response often as a result of adequate training in a specific area, which afford one to perform a task and achieve particular goal (Ibeneme, & Emele, 2021). In other words, skill refers to expertise that has been developed through training and experiences gained overtime together with a high level performance in relation to professional practices (Olatunde, 2022). In public universities, administrative secretaries are in charge of students and staff records, office correspondence, minutes of meetings, and other related affairs in the university. Records kept in public universities include but not limited to student's records, staff records, admission records, academic records, faculty records, department records, medical records, registration of students, certificate, students awarded degrees, online forms, transcripts, checking of results. The administrative secretaries in public universities require competency in using computers and application software in management of students and staff records (Ibeneme & Emele, 2021).

However, in most public universities, especially in Enugu State, Students' scores are not securely stored for easy retrieval and use when the need for them arises. The choice of public universities in Enugu State was based on the evidence of levels of inadequate electronic records management skills by the Administrative Secretaries for effective records management of students and staff records. Some students have had to carry over courses they had passed previously, whose scores were discovered to be missing and the administrative secretaries who are in charge of preparation of transcript, sometimes, find it very difficult to prepare the transcript because of scores that cannot be found in the records (Osakwe, 2020). Popoola & Oluwole (2017) stress concern over the alarming rate of misplacement or loss of vital records, and the slow rate at which needed records are retrieved from their storage files in public universities, because of manual storage of vital information. For instance, many times records relating to students' results are reported missing during final years by administrative secretaries and other officers handling students' results. Some students have to carry over courses they had passed previously due to manual storage of those results. Similarly, vital official document has severally been declared missing in various offices in public universities due to manual storage of such document. It therefore becomes necessary to determine electronic records management skills required by administrative secretaries for effective and efficient record management

in Public Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to evolve electronic records management (ERM) skills required by administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined electronic records:

1. creation skills required by administration secretaries of public universities in Enugu State,
2. storage skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities in Enugu State.
3. retrieval skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities in Enugu state,

Methodology

Design of the Study: The study adopted descriptive survey research design.

Area of the Study: The study was carried out in two public Universities in Enugu State, Nigeria, namely University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN), and Enugu State University of Technology (ESUT).

Population for the Study: Population for the study was made up of 225 administrative Secretaries and 23 Business Education lecturers in the two universities studied. The choice of this population was informed by the that the administrative secretaries are in charge of all records keeping in the institution, while Business Education lecturers are responsible for inculcating and imparting these identified electronic records management skills into students during training, who may be employed as administrative secretaries after graduation.

Sample for the Study: Ninety-eight (98) administrative secretaries were randomly selected from the two universities, while the entire 23 lecturers of Business Education departments in the two universities (18 from UNN and five from ESUT) were studied due to the manageable size.

Instrument for Data Collection: Questionnaire was used for data collection. It was developed based on literature reviewed and specific purposes of the study. The instrument was divided into section A and B. Section A contained demographic information of the respondents, while section B sought information on the electronic records management skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities in Enugu State. The instrument was designed on a four-point rating scale, with response options as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

Method of Data Collection: One hundred and twenty-one (121) copies of the questionnaire were administered by hand to respondents with the help of two research assistants. All the 121 copies were returned representing 100 percent return rate within two weeks of the administration.

Method of Data Analysis: Weighted mean was used to answer the research questions based on real limit of: Strongly Agree (SA) 3.00 - 4.00, Agree (A) 2.00- 2.99, Disagree (D) 1.00 – 1.99. Strongly Disagree (SD) 0.00-1.99. Standard deviation was used to determine the spread of the respondents around the mean and from the opinion of one another. While t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Findings of the Study

Table 1: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Administrative Secretaries and Business Education Lecturers on the Electronic Records Creation Skills Required by Administrative Secretaries of Public Universities Enugu State.

S/N	Electronic Record Creation Skills	$\bar{X}_1$	SD$_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	SD$_2$	$\bar{X}_g$	R
	Ability to:						
1	create printed copies of records and file	3.34	0.85	3.23	0.83	3.29	SA
2	create folder structure on computer systems for electronic record	3.34	0.87	3.30	0.84	3.32	SA
3	create and save documents on labeled storage devices	3.38	0.67	3.38	0.59	3.38	SA
4	allocate standardize file name to create documents	3.06	0.97	3.06	0.78	3.06	SA
5	create databases for students' records / results	3.99	1.10	3.77	1.02	3.88	SA
6	allocate reference numbers to students	3.84	1.00	3.86	1.10	3.85	SA
7	create folders for information about faculties and department	3.87	1.19	3.98	1.21	3.93	SA
8	enter data into database applications for future updates	3.86	1.05	3.87	1.11	3.87	SA
9	identify records and transactions which need to be captured	3.88	0.96	3.76	0.91	3.82	SA
10	create and upload student's results in a database	3.01	1.02	3.03	1.03	3.02	SA
11	create database for examination questions, scores and grades	3.12	0.96	3.04	0.99	3.08	A
12	create word processed documents	3.95	1.03	3.89	0.98	3.92	SA
13	arrange digital records file in a logical order using classification system	3.49	1.19	3.76	1.14	3.63	SA
14	update staff nominal roll/ records of staff for promotion and retirement	3.66	1.16	3.98	1.20	3.82	SA
15	upload students curriculum/ course content in website	3.95	1.08	3.84	1.08	3.90	SA

$\bar{X}_1$ = Mean of Administrative secretaries, $\bar{X}_2$ = Mean of Business Education Lecturers, $\bar{X}_g$=Gand mean; R = Remarks, Number of administrative secretaries = 98; Nunmber of Business Education Lecturers = 23; SA = Strongly agree.

Table 1 shows that all the 15 items were strongly agreed on as the electronic records creation skills required, for their grand means range from $\bar{X}_g$ 3.92-3.02. The standard deviation which ranged from 0.63 to 1.20 indicated that the opinions of the respondents are not far from each other and from the mean.

Table 2: Mean Responses and Standard Deviation of Administrative Secretaries and Business Education Lecturers on the Electronic Records Storage Skills Required by Administrative Secretaries of Public Universities in Enugu State.

S/N	Electronic Record Storage Skills	$\bar{X}_1$	SD_1	$\bar{X}_2$	SD_2	$\bar{X}_g$	R
	Ability to:						
1	use Email to store faculty/ department records	3.74	1.15	3.85	1.10	3.80	SA
2	use automatic back up in the server to store Student/staff records	3.87	0.97	3.89	0.97	3.88	SA
3	use external hard disk to store students' academic records	3.48	1.23	3.78	1.05	3.63	SA
4	use storage devices such as flash drives, CD-ROM Zip drives etc., as backups for students/staff records	3.86	1.08	3.66	1.04	3.76	SA
5	print out documents and file in a hard copy	3.95	1.17	3.91	0.98	3.93	SA
6	transfer student's/staff data to back-ups system for offsite storage	3.59	1.22	3.79	1.08	3.69	SA
7	migrate data periodically to a new software version	3.27	1.13	3.78	1.13	3.53	SA
8	store records to folders on the computer system with unique name	3.81	1.04	3.91	1.06	3.86	SA
9	store data on database applications for future updates and use	3.82	1.17	3.62	0.97	3.72	SA
10	create Backup devices labeled with their original names	3.60	1.20	3.65	1.01	3.63	SA
11	duplicate copies of records	3.82	1.16	3.98	1.18	3.90	SA
12	store data regularly	3.55	1.28	3.87	1.16	3.71	SA

$\bar{X}_1$ = Mean of Administrative secretaries, $\bar{X}_2$ = Mean of Business Education Lecturers, $\bar{X}_g$=Gand mean; R = Remarks, Number of administrative secretaries = 98; Number of Business Education Lecturers = 23; SA = Strongly agree.

Table 2, shows that all the 12 electronic records storage skills obtained grand means of above 3.00 ($\bar{X}_g \geq 3.00$). This implies that the 12 skills are required by administrative secretaries for storing electronic records. The standard deviation score ranged from 0.97 to 1.22 showed that the opinions of the respondents are not far from each other and from the mean.

Table 3: Mean Responses and t-test Analysis of Administrative Secretaries and Business Education Lecturers on the Electronic Records Retrieval Skills Required by Administrative Secretaries in Public Universities in Enugu State.

S/N	Electronic Record Retrieval Skills	$\overline{X}_1$	SD_1	$\overline{X}_2$	SD_2	$\overline{X}_g$	SDg	R
	Ability to:	3.71	1.01	3.79	1.02	3.75	1.02	SA
1	use classification scheme to search for records							
2	use computer assisted retrieval system to search for documents	3.70	1.09	3.76	1.10	3.73	1.10	SA
3	use catalogues to search for records	3..34	0.78	3..87	0.88	3.61	0.83	SA
4	use tracking card to locate documents	3..94	1.02	3.97	1.09	3.96	1.05	SA
5	consult index for location of record	3.53	1.13	3.70	1.15	3.62	1.14	SA
6	use functionally arranged electronic directory to retrieve records from electronic system	3.55	0..38	3.34	0.97	3.45	0.68	SA
7	use file naming conventions to retrieve records	3..06	1.14	3..01	1.10	3.04	1.12	SA
8	use label removal media to search for document	3.24	1.07	3.65	1.13	3.45	1.10	SA
9	use appropriate software to retrieve damaged files	3.77	0.98	3.78	0.98	3.76	0.98	SA
10	locate documents through the use of retention schedule	3.62	1.04	3.91	1.02	3.77	1.03	SA
11	retrieve information from print file hard copies	3.33	1.01	3.56	1.03	3.45	1.02	SA
12	retrieve documents constantly from storage system	3.81	1.20	3.89	1.18	3.85	1.19	SA

$\overline{X}_1$ = Mean of Administrative secretaries, $\overline{X}_2$ = Mean of Business Education Lecturers, $\overline{X}_g$=Gand mean; R = Remarks, Number of administrative secretaries = 98; Number of Business Education Lecturers = 23; SA = Strongly agree.

Table 3 shows that the 12 electronic records retrieval skills each with grand mean scores ranging from $\overline{X}_g$ 3.96 to 3.04. This implies that the administrative secretaries in UNN and ESUT require the 12 skills for retrieval of electronic records. The standard deviation ranged from 0.68 to 1.19 indicating that the opinions of the respondents do not differ from each other and from the mean.

Discussion of Findings

It was found that administrative secretaries and business education lecturers strongly agreed that electronic records creation skills required by administrative secretaries in public universities for effective administration in public universities are: ability to create printed copies of records and file, create folder structure on computer systems for electronic record, create and save documents on labeled storage device, among others. These findings are consistent with the findings of Kemoni (2018) who found that for effective administration in any organization that secretaries must be able to create valid and relevant records using electronic record system for efficiency and reliability purposes. The author further declared that the most effective way of creating such electronic record is when it is carried out at the point of using electronic records

procedures. The findings of this study is also consistent with the study of Ezeonwurie &Ugwoke (2021) who found that most agencies and ministries are having difficulties in record creation due to inadequate skills sets required to create a more robust electronic creation system for effective decision making.

It was found that administrative secretaries and business education lecturers strongly agreed that electronic records storage skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities for effective administration in public universities are: ability to use email to store faculty/department records, use automatic backup in the server to store student/staff records, ability to use external hard disk to store students' academic records, ability to use external hard disk to store students' academic records among others are the electronic records storage skills required by administrative secretaries for effective administration in Public Universities. The findings are in line with Wamukoya & Mutula (2021) who stated that storage of records is essential to electronic records management as it ensures that records are intact, secure, and accessible for as long as tertiary institutions need such records. The findings are also in agreement with Ibeneme & Emele (2021) who stated the secretarial functions and its effect depends much on the availability of office technology equipment, as well as the skills and competencies of the secretaries in using them appropriately.

Administrative secretaries and business education lecturers strongly agreed that electronic records retrieval skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities for effective administration of public universities are: ability to classify scheme to search for records, use computer assisted retrieval system to search for documents, use tracking card to locate document, consult index for location of records among others are the electronic retrieval skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities as strongly agreed by administrative secretaries and business education lecturers for effective administration in public universities. These findings are in consensus with Osakwe (2020) who revealed that ability to use cataloging procedures to search for records, and ability to use tracking card to locate document and retrieve information from print files, are sure ways for effective management of records in organizations.

Conclusion

It was found that the administrative secretaries and Business Education lecturers agreed in all the electronic records creation; storage, and retrieval skills required by administrative secretaries of public universities in Enugu State. Findings of previous studies are consistent with the findings of the present study. The 39 identified electronic records management skills are required by administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State. Acquisition of the skills would no doubt enable administrative secretaries improve their activities in maintenance of proper records keeping in public universities in Enugu State.

Recommendations

Based on the findings the following recommendations were made:
1. Management of public universities in Enugu State should employ trained administrative secretaries based on the findings of the study.

2. Ministry of Education, and National Universities Commission (NUC) should draw up appropriate policies and guidelines on electronic records management procedures.
3. Management of public universities in Enugu State should organize seminars, and workshops regularly for her secretaries based on the skills identified in this study.
4. Administrative secretaries in public universities in Enugu State who are lacking on these skills should enroll in the evening and weekend ICT training for self-upgrade.

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